



Legislation Text

File #: 22-3398, **Version:** 1

Subject:

Historic Vienna Archeological Proposal

BACKGROUND SUMMARY :

Historic Vienna (HVI) is excited to take the next step in understanding what happened on the grounds of the Freeman Store & Museum, 131 Church Street. The non-invasive ground-penetrating radar (GPR) survey that they had conducted, with the Town's approval, on November 1 last year identified 36 potential areas of interest. HVI wants to examine 4 of these areas in more detail through professional excavation.

The 4 areas that merit more extensive investigation are: the road or barn area in the front side yard, two features next to and behind the Freeman Store tentatively identified as wells or privies, and the immediate backyard area by the current brick patio.

HVI formally requested proposals for this excavation work from four archaeology firms and selected a local firm, the Ottery Group, for the excavation subject to the Town's approval. Ottery would conduct an excavation survey over 10 days for a total cost of \$19,530, paid in full by HVI. The survey will include:

- Four 1x1 meter excavation units, placed in each area of interest (side yard with potential barn, two wells/privies, and immediate back yard). The units would be expanded if significant finds are uncovered.
- Sampling shovel test pits in the side yard (by the metal concentrations) at intervals of 10 meters to capture and identify any additional concentrations of artifacts and/or features.
- Document, perform washing, cataloging, and bagging/tagging of all artifacts found.

HVI is responsible for long-term storage and is currently considering Fairfax Archaeology as the repository. If the number of finds and their significance warrants it, HVI would host a Public Archaeology Day and/or a small exhibit within the Freeman Store and consider additional excavations in the future. Ideally, this survey would be performed between November and March in order to not impact events on the Town Green. Work areas would be minimal and could be cordoned off, covered with tarps, or backfilled if needed for events. All excavated areas will be restored to pre-excavation appearance when the project is complete.

OVERVIEW :

Town Code Chapter 20, Sect. 4.c - Park Property. Buildings and other property. Removal of natural resources. No person in a park shall dig, or remove any soil, rock, stone, tree, shrub or plant, down timber or other wood or material, or make any excavation by tool, equipment, blasting or other means

or agency.

Town Code Chapter 25, Sect. 25.1 - Purpose. The Town Council finds that recognition and identification of structures, sites and places of historical significance in the Town is in the public interest and should be encouraged.

HVI's Mission - Since April 5, 1976, Historic Vienna, Inc. (HVI) has served as a nonprofit corporation dedicated to:

- Preserving and promoting Vienna's heritage through the identification, preservation, and interpretation of historically significant places, events, and persons
- Educating the public through permanent and revolving exhibits, outreach programs, special events and publications
- Enhancing a spirit of community through an awareness of Vienna's past

HVI's Lease Agreement

Historic Vienna has a lease with the Town to utilize the premises, known as the Freeman Store and Museum, the Little Library building, and the grounds on which these structures are located for events promoting Historic Vienna, Inc., the Town of Vienna and Vienna's historic heritage.

SUMMARY/STAFF IMPRESSIONS :

The grounds of the Freeman Store & Museum and the Town Green, owned by the Town of Vienna, host the majority of the Town's special events. Should council approve HVI's request to excavate, the Parks and Recreation Department requests that the excavation is complete the end of March 2023 as scheduling of events at the Town Green begins in April 2023. Staff also intends to install irrigation in the plant beds on the grounds of the Freeman Store & Museum in the spring 2023. HVI will be required to consult with the Town's arborist to ensure the excavation sites will not disturb trees or vegetation.

RECOMMENDATION :

It is at the discretion of the Town Council to approve HVI's request to conduct an archeological excavation on the grounds of the Freeman Store and Museum.